A NEW ESSAY ON THE SMALL-POX.

Price Six-Pence.

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WITH

A View to preſerve This NATION from the *Infection* of that *Diſtemper.*

Humbly addreſs'd to the LEGISLATURE, the PHYSICIANS, and Inhabitants of *GREAT-BRITAIN.*

By ***** **** M. D.

Magna voluiſſe ſat eſt.
Salus Populi ſuprema Lex.

LONDON:
Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane.* MDCCXXV.

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EVery Perſon is ſenſible, how fatal the Diſeaſe I inſiſt on, hath been theſe late Years; and perhaps there is not a Family in the Kingdom, that laments not the Spoils of it; which is ſufficient to juſtify every honeſt Attempt, to free the Publick from ſuch a Calamity.

I ſhall not enter into the Diſpute about Inoculation, which is now on the Carpet; by reaſon what I have in my Views, is the ſuperſeding any Occaſion for that Operation; which, if it could be obtain'd, muſt, on many Accounts, be preferr'd to the general Practice of it; and render it more ſafe in the few Inſtances, wherein, after all, it may be eſteem'd proper.

In order to introduce this Propoſal, I think it neceſſary to obſerve what gave me the firſt Hint, and is the real Foundation of it; *viz. That the Diſtemper it ſelf is both of a Foreign Extract, and of a late Origin.* There are ſome Parts of the World entirely unacquainted with it at this Day; and we are aſſur'd, one Quarter of it (viz. *America*) was ſo, till the *Spaniards* ſubdued it; when, by the Infection of a Negro, this cruel Diſeaſe ſpread it ſelf among the Natives, and hath now almoſt extirpated great and populous Clans.

The old *Greek* and *Latin* Phyſicians had no Idea of this Diſorder; For we have the firſt

first Deſcriptions of it from the *Arabian* Writers. I confeſs, we read of Eruptions in Fevers; and have Reaſon to think theſe obtain'd in ancient Time. I know not whether what we term the *Chicken-Pox*, may not be a proper critical Secretion of ſome Humours in Children; for they often affect them, without any previous Contagion, and are attended with no ill Conſequence. But the *Moors* and *Arabs* (who, every Perſon knows, by their ſordid, naſty way of Living, in a hot Climate, have turn'd common Fevers into Plagues;) have perhaps, in the ſame manner, given that malignant, contagious Efficacy, to thoſe Mild and Natural Puſtules.

From this Account of the Caſe, it muſt evidently follow, that the Diſtemper I now treat of, *is One Species of a Plague*; and therefore both *may*, and *ought*, in the ſame Manner, to be extirpated from the Nation.

The late Experiments of Inoculating it, confirm this Account; and, at the ſame Time, ſufficiently demonſtrate, how ſmall a Seed,

leſs

less than the Hundredth Part of a Grain will produce a very plentiful Crop. It's true, this may differ very much, in regard of the Soil; which is a Consideration, in Favour of a Practice, that allows us a convenient Opportunity to prepare the Body, and to adjust both the Quantity and Situation of the Particles, that are thrown into it. But why shou'd we *generally* cultivate after this manner an *Eastern* Plant, that hath made such dreadful Havock among us? Especially since there is so much Reason to question, whether we could promise our selves that Success, if it were *universally* in Use: For the Contagion must increase in Proportion to the Subjects; whereas, on the other hand, when the Disease hath left us, the few who (on the Account of Travelling, or Physick) may have leave to go through the Operation, will run less Hazard in it.

I confess, there will be a Difficulty in overcoming popular Prejudices, in Favour of these Disorders. They esteem them sent of God, for the Sins of Mankind; which is a pious Account of all our Afflictions. But when this Representation discourages the pro-

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per Endeavours to remove them; it hath generally been eſteem'd, in other Caſes, a criminal Abuſe of the Doctrine. This is perfectly the Caſe in *Turkey*; where, for that Reaſon, their great Towns are no more free from the Plague, than ours are from the *Small-Pox*. But I have the Pleaſure to obſerve, that *the Articles of the Church of England* prudently caution us againſt this Conſtruction of the Sentence of Predeſtination; *which, for Curious and Carnal Perſons to have before their Eyes*, is there ſaid to be, *a great Downfall*. But I leave the Management of this Argument to our Divines.

When our People are well reconcil'd to the Religion of the Thing, there can, perhaps, be nothing more eaſy or ſafe, than to deliver us from the Infection. For, the Subſtance of my Propoſal is but, in ſhort,

To take the Method, that was inſiſted on as neceſſary to deliver us from the Plague, if it had been imported among us; as we apprehended it might, from *Marſeilles*.

The Thing is then ſo far done, that I have Reaſon to hope, and ſay, A few Generations hence would enquire, what Sort of Diſtemper their Anceſtors intended, by the Name of the *Small-Pox?* And when ſo great an Advantage may be procur'd by it; there can be nothing unkind, or difficult, only *in obliging the Attendants and Phyſicians, where the* Small-Pox *are, to perform a Sort of* Quarantain; *to bury the Furniture, and purify the Houſes*; which is all that will be requir'd, and to which they will have ſufficient Inducement to conſent, if the Loſs they ſuſtain by it, is but ſupported by the Publick. I know not whether an *Office of Inſurance* might not be eſtabliſh'd for that Purpoſe: But this will be the Care of the Legiſlature, if our Phyſicians do but come into the Scheme: They are the only Perſons that will ſuffer, in a profitable Branch of their Practice. But whatever ſome impudent Quacks may have in their View, I have the Aſſurance to ſay, The Gentlemen of the Faculty, upon the Principles of the New Philoſophy, and the beſt Experience, will eſteem this Propoſal worthy their Conſideration. They know very well, that when the Eruption is compleated,

pleated, and the putrid Particles have fix'd on the Lungs, and vital Parts, the Event muſt be left to Nature; for there is little Room for the Exerciſe of the beſt Skill: And upon that Account, they muſt be pleas'd with an Expedient, that will ſecure their Art from the Tryals, that are vain in themſelves, and often fatal to their Reputation. As for the Scandal of our Profeſſion, the Men who have no Comfort but in Filth and Ordure, and are only Caterers for the Worms; I am not aſham'd to confeſs, I have ſhew'd no regard to their mercenary Ends.

It is to the very Learned and Worthy Body, I ſubmit this Propoſal; who will, I am perſuaded, at leaſt honourably treat a Plan, that is form'd upon the Practice of ſome of the Ancient Phyſicians, the Fathers and firſt Ornaments of this Science; who did not only conſult particular Caſes, but *deliver'd whole Nations at once from Plagues.* If the Method I have ſuggeſted appears to them as well calculated for this Purpoſe, as it's honeſtly deſign'd; I have no Reaſon to doubt the Approbation of Perſons of ſuch a generous and gen-

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teel Education, and whose Business is the Health of the People.

I know, the Fate of this Scheme will depend on their Representation of it; and therefore, by reason *The Royal College of Physicians* are best qualify'd to direct the Execution, I have not presum'd to offer the *particular Rules* that must be observ'd, and that will require the Sanction of the Legislature: It is what, I do not doubt, they will favour their Country with, if this Proposal is so happy as to come recommended by them.

His Most Sacred Majesty, whom God long preserve; and Their *Royal Highnesses*, tho' they are now in no pain for the *Princes*, the young Hopes and Joys of these Realms; They have too much Regard for their People, not to encourage every Thing that may make them Happy and Healthful.

And I hope our *Nobility* and *Gentry* will esteem it too much a common Interest, to neglect this Proposal, if there is a Prospect (as, I think, there is a very good one) in this Way of being secure from this Distemper,

and,

and, at the ſame Time, from a Train of Evils and Ulcers, that generally attend the worſt Sort of it. For why ſhou'd we cheriſh the cruel Brood of *Africa* or *Aſia* in our Bowels, that have made thoſe frightful Ravages among us, and entail this Poiſon on our Poſterity, that was, perhaps, the Import of our Holy Wars in former Days?

How great muſt be the Happineſs to obſerve the new Scenes ariſe, when a noiſome Plague ſhall ceaſe to *change our Countenances, and ſend us away, or to make us a Terror to our ſelves and others!* How deſirable would it be, no more (unleſs by the ſpecial Commiſſion of Heaven) to feel any of the Fury of it, filling our Graves, or ſpoiling our Features? We ſhou'd not then ſo frequently meet the diſmal Scars, and indelible Characters, it hath left on almoſt every Face: But *Britain*, no longer inhabited by theſe Sort of *Picts*, would become *Fair Albion* once again.

Then, to uſe the ſacred Stile, *may our Sons be as Plants grown up in their Youth*; they will always carry their firſt Bloom; *and our Daughters as Corner-ſtones, poliſh'd after the ſimilitude*

of a Palace; or, in our Language, more ſmooth and ſparkling than the beſt-wrought Marble. Then would all the Domeſtick Virtues flouriſh: The Beautiful Mothers, ſecure of the Affection of their Huſbands, wou'd convey the healthy Treaſure to their Offspring: The Ladies wou'd ſhine in our Aſſemblies; and the Gentlemen ſoften, under their Influence, into every Virtue. Let future Ages tell the reſt with Joy!

Full of this Project, I can't forbear imaging to my ſelf the Acknowledgments of a whole Iſland; and every Perſon in it, contributing to make my Life eaſy and happy, who have in this Propoſal ſtudied to make theirs ſo.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

WHen I wrote this Scheme, I was very ſenſible of ſome conſiderable Objections, which a Learned Gentleman, who is a Glory to the Profeſſion, did me the Honour to make to it: As, *That the Seeds of the* Small-Pox *are almoſt in every Houſe, which hath made it the Diſeaſe of the Country.* But how much ſoever they are naturaliz'd to the Soil, and have diffus'd themſelves in it; I have Reaſon to hope, Care and Induſtry might ſurmount this Difficulty. For, the Particles appear, by their ſlow Operation, not to have that Life and Action, which thoſe have which conſtitute the Plague: If every Houſe, therefore, in *Great Britain* (that is ſuſpected) would but ſubmit to *ſuch a Purification* as the *Inſpir'd Lawgiver* (I had almoſt ſaid *Phyſician*) preſcrib'd in another Species of a Plague, *Le-*

vit.

vit. xiii. 47, 48, &c. and xiv. 33, &c. we might obſerve the happy Effects of it, not only in deſtroying the Vegetation of the Seeds of this Diſtemper, but of ſome others, which ſubſiſt in Rags and Dirt. In general, it muſt render the Nation more clean and healthful: And why ſhould not a *Divine Law*, as far as it relates *immediately to Health*, lay us under a Moral Obligation now, where there is any Parity in the Caſe, as I apprehend in the preſent? Our Criticks may obſerve with Pleaſure, the *Arabian* Phyſicians apply to the *Small-Pox* ſome of the Terms which occur in the *Arabick* Verſion of theſe Chapters. If it is ſaid, The Prieſts were to execute the Sacred Order; it is, becauſe *They* were the Ancient *Phyſicians*. But it is not my Buſineſs here to conſider the typical Uſe of it.

I apprehend it will be urged, That after all this Care, when they are extirpated in one Place, they may poſſibly break out in another. It is what may be expected for ſome Time, and will only require a more conſtant Attendance on this Diſtemper through the whole Iſland: In which this Advantage will probably be gain'd; That whenever it does

ſprout

ſprout in any Quarter, there will be the greateſt Reaſon to expect, where the Soil is not too favourable, (if I may be allow'd to purſue a Figure that will beſt explain it to the common Reader) it will be a weak and tender Shoot, which we may eaſily weed out, and not one rank Crop upon another, as we ſometimes experience now.

As for the Time that will be requir'd to accompliſh all this; it can't be ſuppos'd I ſhou'd preſume to determine it: For, our Phyſicians know, it was ſeveral Years before we were rid of the laſt Plague. It is ſufficient, that the Affair is of ſo much Conſequence, that the Children who are yet unborn demand our Attention to it.

The greateſt Objection is from the Prejudices of the People; who are inclin'd to think every Abridgment of their Liberty, tho' it is for their Advantage, inhuman and barbarous. But in this Inſtance, I know not how it is; Perſons of Quality and Fortune, and very many of the Populace, are almoſt come into this Practice of themſelves, from their own Obſervations and Reaſonings upon the

Head. The Husband and Wife, we have ſeen content to live apart for a Time; or, if they are determin'd againſt it, they might perhaps be indulg'd to perform the *Quarantain* together.

The *Jews*, as ſtiff-neck'd and rebellious a People as they are repreſented in the Holy Writings, had ſo much regard to their Health, as to ſubmit to a much ſeverer *Regimen*. For there is a vaſt Difference between a Separation from Society for a few Days, which is all this Scheme requires; and theirs, which in ſome Caſes continued for Life.

I can't doubt, the Worthy and Learned College of Phyſicians, if they came into the Propoſal, wou'd take care to direct the Execution of it, to a general Satisfaction: And upon this Account, if the Legiſlature made them a Sort of *Office of Inſurance*; the Contributions they would receive from the whole Nation, and the Voluntary Benefactions of very many, to whoſe Families this Diſtemper hath been fatal, would, I'm perſuaded, render them very capable of diſcharging that Service, by their Agents, with great Applauſe. I might ſuggeſt

geſt the Pleaſure they muſt have by that Correſpondence this would eſtabliſh, to obſerve the State of Diſeaſes and Phyſick through the whole Nation, and to direct the Practice of it in this Inſtance: Which laſt is a Conſideration of too much Weight, not to be offer'd to the Publick: For, if any Thing can, it muſt reconcile every Perſon to this Propoſal; That He, and his Relations, tho' they are the meaneſt of the People, (among whom this Diſtemper generally lodges) will have proper Medicines and Attendance, and become the Care of the moſt Learned Body of Phyſicians in the World.

FINIS.

FINIS.